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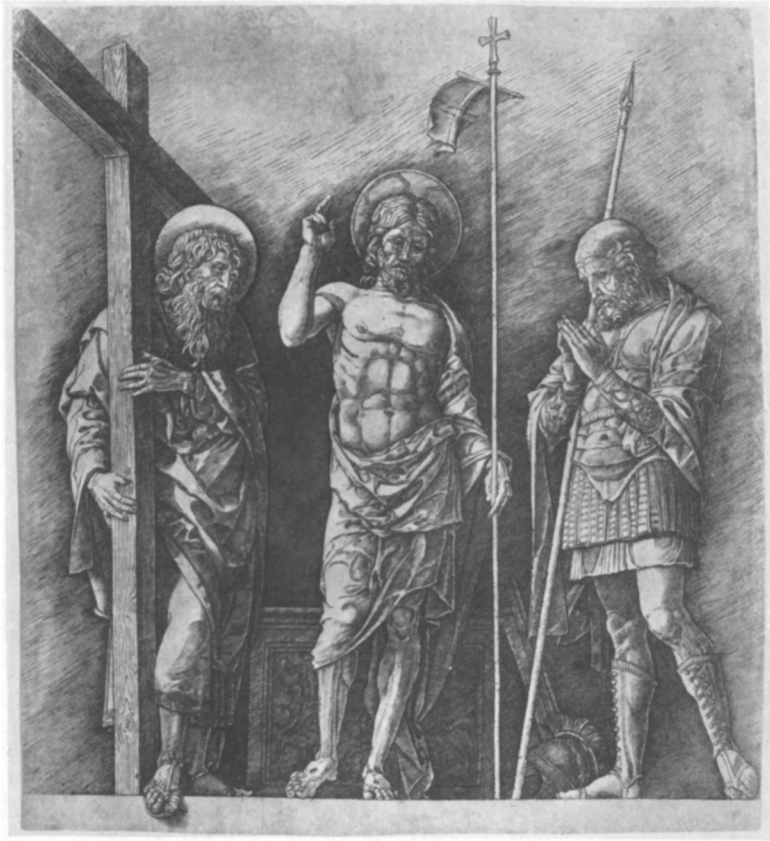
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MANTEGNA'S RISEN CHRIST
A FINE IMPRESSION OF A GREAT PRINT

THERE has just been placed on exhibition in the Room of Recent Accessions the of the most beautiful and important prints which has as yet entered the Museum

Davidsohn of Berlin and is familiar to all students of Italian engraving through the reproductions in Paul Kristeller's book on Mantegna.

As one studies the history of the graphic arts, one comes to regard it as matter of course that an artist cannot achieve great



RISEN CHRIST BETWEEN SAINT ANDREW AND SAINT LONGINUS
BY ANDREA MANTEGNA

collection—a print which not only is possibly unique but which represents at its ripest and best the design and craftsmanship of one of the very greatest artists who ever worked in any of the graphic media. It is the impression of Mantegna's Risen Christ between Saint Andrew and Saint Lunginus which for many years was one of the chief treasures of the very remarkable collection of old prints formed by Paul

fame and influence without the aid of a numerically large volume of work. The lists of prints by Dürer, Holbein, Rembrandt, Goya, and Daumier, to mention only a few of those who have most influenced subsequent development, all run into three figures, and this is true of every great school except the primitive Italian, where the two great outstanding artistic personalities are Pollaiuolo of Florence

and Mantegna of Padua, the first of whom made only one print and the other but seven. As few other things does this simple statistical fact bear witness to the power and importance of their work, for it puts them aside in a little class by themselves as the men who have most easily captured the imaginations of both contemporaries and succeeding generations.

Among the earliest Italian engravers, their work shows little or no trace of that specifically "engraved" quality which plays such a large part in appreciation of old prints, their technique being that of the pen rather than of the burin and completely lacking in the optical brilliance which that tool so easily lends itself to. The outlines strongly marked with deep-cut lines that are strangely nervous for burin work, the shading is filled in almost flat by two series of diagonal lines, one long and emphatic, between which the other and slighter lies at a slightly different angle like the return strokes of a pen when hastily laying a series of approximately horizontal lines. It is a technique that seems to have been little used outside of Italy, and never elsewhere with the success achieved by these two masters.

Impressions from Mantegna's plates while not common are nevertheless not infrequently to be met with in the market and in private collections, and are familiar to all students and amateurs of early engraving. Unfortunately, however, fine impressions pulled from the plates before they suffered from the wear of printing are of the very greatest rarity and have been seen by the most limited number of people. As a result of this the generally accepted idea of what a Mantegna should look like is erroneous, as it is based solely upon hard, dry, late impressions of the well-known variety. Offhand one can think of no other prints which are not only accepted but eagerly sought for in such poor impressions, for no collector would be willing to show with pride equally tired impressions from plates by any of the other better-known masters, and that this should be so speaks volumes for the fundamental greatness of Mantegna's design.

The impressions which show the plates

as they actually left Mantegna's hand are so different in quality, contain so much work that is not visible in the later pulls, that at first sight it is almost impossible to believe they can have been printed from the same coppers. Usually in a soft ink which varies in color with each impression from light brown to a nondescript dark greenish blue, the very fine impressions are remarkable for their peculiar tenderness of surface, which much resembles the bloom on a peach, and is as far as possible removed from the rude metallic hardness of the ordinary impressions. The typical impression of the Risen Christ is rough and almost savage in the severity and sparseness of its lines, but in the Museum example, which is apparently the only one known to have survived in this state, the entire surface may be seen to have been "glazed," to adopt a painter's term, with a multitude of the most delicate shading lines. This plate therefore instead of being raw was as matter of fact the most highly worked of all that Mantegna made. The difference is clearly shown by the two full-sized, reproductions of detail, one made from the Museum impression and the other from a facsimile which accurately enough represents the plate in its familiar condition.

While nothing is known concerning the time when Mantegna actually produced his plates, there can be little doubt that he and Pollaiuolo were the first two Italians to whom the phrase "painter engraver" may be justly applied, the earlier work all displaying the intellectual qualities of the artisan rather than of the artist. There is some reason for believing that he did not take up engraving prior to 1475, and there are in existence copies by Dürer, dated 1494, of his two plates of the Battle of the Sea Gods, unusually fine impressions of which are also in the Museum collection. The Risen Christ may on technical grounds safely be put at a somewhat later date than the Battle, for as said by Dr. Kristeller "The technique displays a still greater delicacy and softness, increased plastic quality of modelling, and an even richer variety of light and shade. The individual lines are finer and closer together, producing a uniform tone. (It is true

that these qualities of technique are to be seen only in the few good impressions: for instance, in . . . the unique impression of the 'Risen Christ,' belonging to Mr. Paul Davidsohn, in Berlin). In the action and expression, moreover, may be discerned something of that exaggeration and violence which are unmistakable distinguishing traits of Mantegna's last period of activity."

As for the composition itself, it is well

One would be almost tempted to see in this composition the design for a group of statuary, perhaps for the high altar of S. Andrea in Mantua, which was raised above the most sacred relic possessed by the city, the 'preziosissimo sangue di Cristo.' Longinus, who is supposed to have brought this relic to Mantua, and Andrea were the especial patron saints of the town, and particularly of the Church of S. Andrea. . . . This is only a con-



DETAIL FROM THE MUSEUM IMPRESSION
OF MANTEGNA'S RISEN CHRIST



DETAIL FROM A FACSIMILE OF
MANTEGNA'S RISEN CHRIST

again to let Dr. Kristeller speak—"The engraving which portrays the Risen Christ between Andrew and Longinus has already been cited as a characteristic example of the preponderance in Mantegna's later works of the classic spirit over that specifically Christian. The austere majesty, the 'awfulness' of the compositions [i. e. of this print and the horizontal Entombment, also by Mantegna], beside which such Michelangelesque conceptions as the 'Moses' alone are worthy to be placed, the grandeur of the gigantic, Jove-like figure of Christ, is still further enhanced by the statuesque impressiveness of the group.

jecture, but it is inspired not only by external probability, but by the thoroughly statuesque character of the composition. This view is strengthened by the calm, compact grouping, the measured movements, the smooth folds of the draperies (replacing the usual fluttering garments), the simple treatment of the background, and especially by the abrupt view of the figures seen from below standing on the very edge of a pedestal, nothing whatever being visible of the ground. Also the fact that the extended foot of Saint Andrew, projecting beyond the pedestal, throws a shadow upon the front surface of the pedi-

ment, and that Christ is represented as looking down in the act of blessing—all this points clearly to the fact that the composition was intended for a group of statuary. The sarcophagus and the helmet on the ground were probably only added to the engraving in order to relieve the monotony of the background. The group, moreover, makes even materially an impression of such great size that in the engraving it has quite the appearance of being a reproduction from a work of vast dimensions. From such an example one can easily come to realize how little the impression of magnitude is dependent upon the material form in which a work of art is executed.” W. M. I., Jr.

A PART OF A RADZIVIL HORSE PANOPLY

FERDINAND, Archduke of Tyrol, who died in 1595, was in a way the J. Pierpont Morgan of his time: he was interested in large affairs, notably of banking and commerce; his advice was sought widely; but above all things he was the greatest collector when collecting had already become fashionable. He searched Europe minutely for objects of the same type which interested our president. His tapestries, enamels, ivories, pictures, books (including five hundred wonderful manuscripts) were gathered from the best sources: dealers in antiquities followed him about, and his home in Schloss Ambras became a Mecca for everyone interested in mediaeval art. But while Mr. Morgan bought few beautiful arms (especially, as he told the writer, because they were not to be had), Ferdinand of Tyrol collected them zealously. His agents visited private armories and made purchases at prices which, even in those days, were awe-inspiring, and in the end his armor collection grew to be the foremost of all time. Like Mr. Morgan, he believed in sumptuous catalogues for art objects; and for his armor he caused a fine folio to be published, illustrating in copperplate more than a hundred of his princely and historical harnesses (edited by J. Schrenck von Notzing, first edition, 1601).

Ferdinand's collection, as probably everyone knows, soon became a heritage of the House of Austria, and it ranks as the most important possession of the present Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. Now, among the archducal treasures there is a suit of half-armor which concerns us especially. According to the early catalogue (Pl. 75±), it belonged to Nicolaus Christoff von Radzivil (1549-1616), a puissant ruler in his day, prince of the Holy Roman Empire, duke of Olyka and Nieswicz, who fought valiantly against Russia was wounded at the siege of Polotzk, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and left an account of it. His armor, according to Wendelin Boeheim, a learned director of the Imperial Collection of Armor, “is from its tasteful and technical decoration one of the most beautiful in the Austrian collection. It is covered everywhere with ornamental bands of etching, enameled, some in red, some in black, the groundwork showing a finely etched snail-shell design, filled in with opaque white in cold enamel. This treatment is quite unique in the domain of armor. Its maker is unknown, and it bears no armorer's mark” (1894, *Album hervorragender Gegenstände. . . . Kaiserhauses*, p. 19).

This half-armor in Vienna consists of the usual elements: helmet, collar piece, breast, and back-plates, waist and hip guards, together with defenses for shoulders, arms, and hands. It lacks the entire leg armor, various reinforcing pieces, *pièces de rechange*, together with its horse panoply. They are not mentioned in the early catalogue: nevertheless one could hardly go astray if he prophesied that sooner or later some of the missing pieces would “turn up”—for surely so elegant a harness would have been furnished with several headpieces, numerous arm defenses, various models of hip guards, and the like. Ferdinand, it is clear, missed them in his ear purchase: and they either remain in some armory of the Radzivil, or, barring accident, are scattered about Europe. So, if we take pains to review the material in various collections, public and private, we are able today to identify a number of the missing pieces. Thus, we find the